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Upson, Lent Dayton

One year of city  
management in...

Dayton

1915

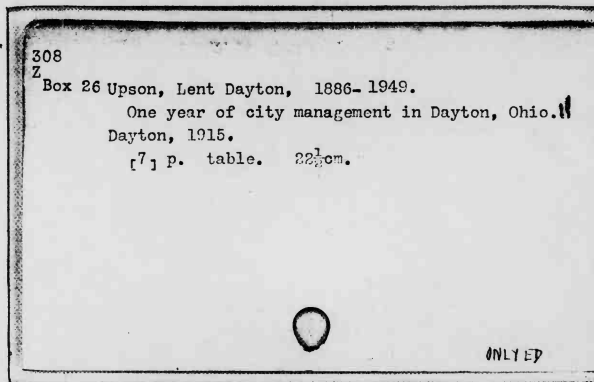
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President Butler

# One Year of City Management in Dayton, Ohio

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Box 26

By

**LENT D. UPSON**

*Director, Bureau of Municipal Research*

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**BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH**

**2nd FLOOR U. S. BUILDING**

**DAYTON, OHIO**

**March, 1915**

The Bureau of Municipal Research is a non-political civic organization, supported by the voluntary contributions of citizens. Its purpose is to give the public accurate, complete data relative to the condition of the city government; and co-operation to city officials in the introduction of modern methods of conducting public business.

D. Frank Garland, *President*  
Miss A. I. Dilks, *Secretary*  
L. D. Upson, *Director*

Ms. 31, 1916. B. 9

## One Year of City Management in Dayton, Ohio

IN Dayton, Ohio, a city of 130,000 population, an effort has been made by altering the type of government to remedy some of the more apparent deficiencies common to municipal administrations in this country. It is believed that by eliminating partizanship, concentrating responsibility, and providing for permanence in the tenure of administrative offices there should be a decided increase in the efficiency with which public affairs are conducted. Dayton has not pinned its faith for reform either upon improved governmental machinery or upon better men, but has endeavored to combine sensibly these two factors.

### TYPE OF GOVERNMENT

In the Dayton government the legislative power resides in a commission of five, elected at large on a non-partisan ticket. This commission has all the powers which formerly resided in the city council. Their control of the city budget is in unusual detail; they pass improvement ordinances; they enact police regulations, which in Dayton as in most cities are concerned with muzzling dogs and the preventing of "jay walking," and finally they appoint a city manager, or general head of departments.

All administrative functions are delegated to this city manager, appointed for an indefinite term; trained for his particular job; and upon whom is placed the responsibility of securing an economical and efficient government. He is purely an administrative officer with administrative functions only.

Frankly, his position is predicated on the assumption that while every American citizen is capable of governing himself, not every citizen is capable of being elected to and administering the office of city engineer, city physician, city attorney, city bridge builder or city chemist. These positions have nothing whatever to do with the policies of city government, and if the public money is to bring

a maximum of results, these jobs must be filled for ability rather than national political belief. The rights of the public are amply protected through this organization. Certainly the voter has little concern in technical details of how administrative policies are carried out.

#### FINANCIAL RESULTS SECURED

The results which have been secured from this separation of legislative and administrative powers, and the correlation of departmental efforts have been notable. In the management of public funds alone new methods have more than justified the change. Public expenditures have been kept strictly within the income, instead of an annual deficit of \$60,000 a year which prevailed for the six years previous. An accounting system is being installed equal to that of any private concern in the country, and which will furnish a complete control over both funds and property. Liabilities may not be incurred unless there are funds for their liquidation, thus absolutely preventing over-drafts. Funds are appropriated in accordance with a detailed budget classified by activity of departments and character of expenditure. Supplies and equipment are being standardized, and the purchasing division is buying from the lowest and best bidder, and not from friends of the administration.

In place of a record of cash receipts and cash expenditures suitable to a cross-roads grocery, and which prevails in practically every municipality, Dayton has made possible a balance sheet, supported by distinct schedules for each public utility and industry owned; provided an adequate control over permanent property, equipment and stores; and has a definite knowledge of accounts receivable and of liabilities incurred, so that no revenues may escape collection, nor appropriations and allotments be overdrawn. Adequate centralized accounting has insured the payment of several thousand dollars of revenue formerly lost; made overdrafts impossible; discovered errors of over two hundred thousand dollars in sinking fund calculations; makes all disbursements by checks; and controls the cost records installed over street repairs, street cleaning, garbage and ash removal, etc.

#### PURCHASING SUPPLIES

It is in the purchasing of supplies that the most notable savings have been made and which will amount to more than \$33,000 on an expenditure of \$200,000. A department may not purchase until its requisition has been approved by the manager, and the purchasing

agent does not order until he is assured by the accounting division that appropriated funds are available and have been properly encumbered therefor. Prices are ten per cent. to ninety per cent. less than those formerly paid. Bills are discounted at two per cent. for payment within ten days after the first of the month following. Recognizing that prices fluctuate, larger savings taken at random are: printed matter, \$1,000; cylinder oil, \$1,000; coal, \$400; meat, \$560; fire hose, \$1,600, etc.

#### PUBLIC BETTERMENTS

In public works the handicap of inadequate funds has been overcome in part by increased efficiency. The extension of service has been unusual. Inspection of public contract work has been completely reorganized and contractors rigidly required to conform to specifications. Street repairs are being made entirely from public revenues with the exception of a balance from bonds issued in former years; there is almost double the amount of street cleaning; streets in the business section are flushed for the first time in the history of the city; collection of rubbish and ashes has been resumed after a year of lapse and made efficient, and reasonably adequate garbage collection is to be had for the first time in ten years. In the division of water every effort has been made to secure a supply more nearly equal to the demand. Pumping machinery has been overhauled, leaks investigated, pressure increased, and in the face of increased pumpage there has been a decrease in the amount of coal burned. A municipal garage has been established; all cars are labeled, their use placed under control, and record of costs installed.

The mention of public work improvements leads to a discussion of the necessity of a program for the future. In Dayton a conscientious effort has been made to outline work in many directions. The water plans which have been recently completed will cover sixteen years of construction; a sewer survey costing \$30,000 is under way; a comprehensive study of public waste disposal has been made; an investigation of adult delinquency is being completed, and upon its findings will be based the future correctional policies of the municipality. The administration may change, and the present appointed executives make way for others, but their successors will have a definite plan for public construction which they must follow or set aside only after consideration. They will not be required to go ahead on guesswork, or on the plane of only one or two years anticipated duration.

## WORK FOR PUBLIC WELFARE

Dayton has definitely provided in its charter for a department of public welfare which shall direct activities having to do with the social and moral conditions of the citizen—health, charities, recreation, corrections, etc. Civic progress through this department has been extraordinary and the administration may lean most heavily for support upon the results secured. The health division was studied and reorganized. In addition the nursing of the Visiting Nurses Association and of the Tuberculosis Society has been brought under city management. This single control of public nursing has resulted in an infant death rate from forty per cent, to fifty per cent. lower than that in three years previous. The removal of insanitary conditions; the regulation of vacant property; a more careful inspection of dairies and places where food products are sold; the stringent regulation of quarantine; and the inspection of school children who have been exposed to contagion lessened morbidity and has reduced the death rate by two points in a thousand, the equivalent of some two hundred and fifty lives. This is notable, and there is nothing of which the administration in Dayton may be prouder than the fifty-five babies' lives which have been saved.

The facilities for public recreation have been extended far beyond those formerly prevailing. A self-supporting public bathing beach has been opened, in connection with which next year there will be operated a municipal dance hall and restaurant. Seventy-five families cultivated community gardens last summer; there were twenty-two experimental gardens for hundreds of school children under the supervision of an expert gardener; and nearly three hundred vacant lots were prepared as gardens. The number of playgrounds under public supervision has been doubled, and new equipment secured until there are now thirty-five play centers for young people.

In the treatment of adult delinquents, new policies are being tried—the moral effect of clean clothing and plenty of baths has been combined with outdoor labor which would otherwise have gone undone. In frequent cases men and women have been placed on probation and jobs secured for them. A municipal lodging house has been established where a half day's labor is exacted for a night's lodging with meals. A free legal aid bureau has been established for those who are too poor to secure private counsel. This division at a cost of \$625 has handled over seven hundred applications for services. The city's prosecutor on the other hand has done commendable work in settling family quarrels and back fence squabbles without appeal to the law.

## MANY IMPROVEMENTS PLANNED

Other progressive works of this city involve the regular conference of department heads; the gradual elimination of public dumps; a thorough investigation of the safety department and pension funds; the beginning of a school for police and firemen; the purchase of motor fire apparatus; the establishment of a municipal garage; a new building code; improved city car service; a civic music league; new traffic regulations; efficient inspection of street contracts; the creation of street oiling districts and many other worthy innovations—at least to conservative Dayton.

## COSTS INVOLVED

The tax payer, however, much as he may approve these improvements in government, naturally inquires as to the increased cost. And if economies have been effected, what has been done with the savings? The operating revenues for the year just ending were \$77,709 more than for the year preceding. With this sum, plus savings, the following are a part of the additional services rendered:

Ash and rubbish removal—No service in 1913; amount expended in 1914, \$35,000.

Street repair—Increased this expenditure from income in 1914 over 1913, without issuing bonds, by \$23,000.

Additional street cleaning—Almost double the 1913 appropriation was allowed in 1914 by an increase of \$12,500.

Additional health service—Almost double the 1913 appropriation was allowed in 1914 by an increase of \$15,000.

Parks and Playgrounds—Increased \$8,000 in 1914, doubling the number of playgrounds.

Police Department—Increased \$6,700 in 1914 by the addition of seven policemen and two policewomen.

Continuous audit—None in 1913; 1914, \$2,000.

Purchasing—None in 1913; 1914, \$3,900.

Special garbage investigation—None in 1913; 1914, \$2,000.

Free Legal Aid—None in 1913; 1914, \$625.

Police and fire pensions fund—None taken from income in 1913; 1914, \$5,600.

New Municipal Court—Increased \$19,000 in 1914.

Appended is a comparative statement of expenditures for the last year of the old administration and the first year of the new. To be accurate, however, it is impossible to judge comparative costs on this data. It must be remembered that as a result of flood emergency bonds, the old administration operated certain departments for several months almost entirely from bond money. Also the operation of restrictive tax laws in Ohio has reduced municipal expenditures to a point below that at which adequate government may be secured. It is a happy circumstance that the new government was able to secure a small addition in revenues, and they have rendered a more than satisfactory account of their increased stewardship. Lastly, cheapness is no more a criterion of good government than it is of good clothes, good tobacco or of good household necessities.

The government of Dayton is not ideal. Human frailties, local prejudices, and inadequate funds will always combine to make that a mark only to be approached. However, applying any recognized tests, it has already outstripped in results anything yet secured from commission government. Of even greater value than material progress is the stimulation of citizens' interest which has taken place. A greater degree of accomplishment is being demanded of public officers than ever before, and it is possible that in time an efficient citizenship will come to take the part in government which it is proper and necessary that it should.

#### Comparison of Operating Expenditures during Last Year of Old Type of Government and First Year of the New.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT		1914	1913
Commission .....	\$	6,650	\$ 15,513
Civil Service Board .....		6,006	10,701
Civil Service Board .....		2,528	2,497
Office of City Manager .....		18,971	---
Department of Law .....		11,037	10,286
Department of Finance .....		20,107	15,205
Municipal Court .....		*32,395	10,345
Board of Elections .....		*18,035	*44,661
Charter Commission .....		---	*1,379
Codifying Commission .....		---	1,757
Interest .....		1,739	6,258
Total .....	\$	\$117,468	\$118,602

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE		
Office of Director .....	\$	6,638
Division of Engineering .....		29,934
" " Streets .....		143,503
" " Water .....		145,355
" " Sinking Fund and Interest .....		30,420
" " Public Lands and Buildings .....		26,333
" " Street Lighting .....		96,203
Total .....	\$	\$478,386

\$	8,283
	47,110
	41,350
	186,323
	30,065
	7,875
	97,425
\$	\$418,431

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE		
Office of Director .....	\$	9,012
Division of Legal Aid .....		534
" " Charities .....		2,976
" " Correction .....		16,857
" " Parks and Playgrounds .....		16,445
" " Recreation .....		10,274
" " Health .....		35,121
" " Hospitals .....		51,585
Total .....	\$	\$142,804

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	3,299
	14,863
	17,755
	-----
	20,667
	54,705
	-----
\$	\$111,289

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY		
Office of Director .....	\$	2,828
Division of Police .....		151,103
" " Fire .....		166,326
" " Weights and Measures .....		1,292
" " Dog Pound .....		1,255
" " Pensions .....		5,600
Total .....	\$	\$328,404

\$	3,327
	161,721
	172,338
	2,143
	1,502
	-----
\$	\$341,031

Total operating expenditures, 1914 .....	\$	\$1,067,062
" " " " , 1913 .....		989,353
Excess, 1914 over 1913 .....	\$	\$ 77,709

\*Not controlled by the city government.



## **What will the New Charter in your Town** **do to Insure**

**A continuous audit of city accounts, with a general balance sheet exhibiting assets and liabilities of the city**

**The requirement of summaries of city income and expenditure rather than of receipts and expense**

**Accounting procedure adequate to record in detail all transactions affecting the acquisition, custodianship and disposition of values**

**A scientific budget classified uniformly for the main functional divisions of all departments**

**Standardization and centralized purchasing of all supplies**

**Time sheets and certification of all pay-rolls**

**Current financial and operating statements exhibiting each transaction and the cost thereof**

**Adequate franchise control**

**Citizen boards to consult and advise with the various departments**

**Standardization of service and compensation, insuring equal pay for equal work in every branch of the city government**



**END OF  
TITLE**